



TEMA

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Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee Seeks Expedited Federal Disaster Declaration for Relief in Six Tornado-Impacted Counties

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee asked President Donald Trump today to expedite declaring a major disaster in Tennessee so federal recovery assistance can be made available to counties cleaning up as a result of the deadly tornado and severe weather in the state on March 3, 2020.

“Local and state emergency officials and responders, working alongside countless volunteers and non-profit organizations, have worked tirelessly to respond to the needs of their families, communities, and neighborhoods,” Gov. Lee said. “It now becomes necessary for our federal partners to make resources available to supplement our efforts and get Tennessee and those impacted on our way to recovery.”

Gov. Lee’s request specifically asks the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) to make its Public Assistance (PA) program available in six, impacted counties – Benton, Carroll, Davidson, Gibson, Putnam, and Wilson – to provide reimbursement assistance to the impacted counties for their costs related to debris removal and emergency protective measures during the tornado and severe weather response.

“As FEMA and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) continue joint damage assessments with local officials, we’ll ask that other counties and other categories PA assistance be added to the federal declaration,” said TEMA Director Patrick Sheehan. “We will work to demonstrate federal assistance is necessary to lessen the financial burden on local resources for tornado response and recovery.”

Information about FEMA’s PA program is at: <https://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>.

Gov. Lee’s request also asks FEMA to make its Individual Assistance (IA) program available in Davidson, Putnam, and Wilson counties. If awarded, the IA program would provide some direct federal help to eligible Tennessee residents in the requested counties for disaster-related costs and expenses.

The State Emergency Operations Center in Nashville has been operational since the morning of March 3, 2020, when a storm system moved through the state bringing tornadic activity, heavy rains, powerful winds, and hail through the west and middle regions of the state.

A confirmed tornado, with wind speeds from 155 mph to 165 mph, left a wide path of destruction through portions of Benton, Carroll, Davidson, Putnam, and Wilson counties.

The tornado and severe storms caused 24 weather-related fatalities, damaged or destroyed five public schools, left 101,521 residents without power, and closed State Government offices.

Tennessee remains in a State of Emergency and the State Emergency Operations Center in Nashville, Tenn. continues to operate in support of the ongoing tornado and severe weather response.

[Click for TEMA tornado and severe weather recovery information on debris removal, donations, volunteering, and other resources.](#)

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About the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency: TEMA's mission is to coordinate preparedness, response and recovery from man-made, natural and technological hazards in a professional and efficient manner in concert with our stakeholders. Follow TEMA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#), and, at www.tn.gov/tema.

About ReadyTN: ReadyTN is a mobile device application from the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) providing emergency preparedness, response, and recovery information to Tennesseans. Ready TN is available for mobile devices running Apple and Android operating systems. For more information on ReadyTN's features and on downloading, visit www.tn.gov/tema/ready-tn.html.